

Press Release
February 16, 2002

USTR ZOELICK ANNOUNCES ENHANCED SUPPORT FOR SADC TRADE COMPETITIVENESS

Pretoria, South Africa - The United States Trade Representative Robert B. Zoellick announced today that the United States is providing \$8.7 million in support of three new trade capacity building initiatives for the Southern Africa Development Community region (SADC). The support programs were announced at a meeting of ministers from eight SADC countries—Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Tanzania and Angola. Also present were SADC Executive Secretary Prega Ramsamy and U.S. Ambassador to Botswana John E. Lange, the U.S. Secretary of State's Special Representative to SADC.

Ambassador Zoellick is visiting Kenya, South Africa and Botswana on February 12-21 in a trip focused on encouraging the growing trade between the United States and sub-Saharan Africa. "The initiatives funded by this support program," said Ambassador Zoellick, "will help the region to become more competitive in global markets." Ambassador Lange added, "They will also help SADC regional trade agenda and the implementation of its free trade area." U.S. Trade Representative Robert B. Zoellick is a member of U.S. President George W. Bush's Cabinet with the rank of Ambassador who serves as the President's principal trade policy adviser and chief trade negotiator.

Funding for the three new trade capacity building initiatives is being provided through the Regional Center for Southern Africa of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), which is headquartered in Gaborone, Botswana. They include a three-year, \$3 million support package that will help SADC countries take advantage of duty-free access to the U.S. market under the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA); a two-year, \$2.7 million customs cooperation and trade facilitation initiative that will help promote both intra-regional and global trade competitiveness; and a two-year, \$3 million agricultural trade initiative that will help local producers meet global food safety standards.

The eight SADC ministers met in Pretoria with Ambassador Zoellick to discuss the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) and its proposed expansion under AGOA II, as well as synergies between AGOA and the SADC Free Trade Area. They also discussed the World Trade Organization (WTO) and opportunities for U.S.-SADC cooperation following the successful Doha meeting of the WTO in November 2001.

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